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AUTHOR Davies, Florence
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ABSTRACT

Development of language awareness programs at the elementary and early secondary levels requires teacher willingness, coherent policy and guidelines for selecting methods and content, and teacher awareness and acceptance of the policies and guidelines and their practical potential. Studies suggest that in Great Britain, the first three requirements are already met. What is required for further development of language awareness programs is a methodology that is not prescriptive or exercise-based as has previously been proposed, but explorative and experimental. Language features of all sizes and at all levels should be included in the curriculum. Syllabuses that embody this approach should be developed and made available to teachers so that they can understand the principles, see them illustrated, and accept them. In addition, research illustrating children's development of language awareness will be helpful to teachers and curriculum planners. (MSE)

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REQUIREMENTS OF A LANGUAGE AWARENESS PROGRAMME FOR THE PRIMARY TO MIDDLE YEARS

Florence Davies

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REQUIREMENTS OF A LANGUAGE AWARENESS PROGRAMME FOR THE PRIMARY TO MIDDLE YEARS

Florence Davies

It is clear from the papers published elsewhere in this book that a number of distinct models of Language Awareness courses for the middle-secondary level of education have been developed and are in the process of being tested. To date no model of the kind of Language Awareness programme which might provide a foundation for those courses at the primary-middle level has been developed.

It is not my intention here to attempt the task of presenting such a model. Rather, I shall seek to identify certain basic conditions which I believe will need to be met if the development of language awareness in our primary and middle schools is to become a practical reality. I will then consider the extent to which these conditions have been met and go on to explore what might further be required for the development of Language Awareness programmes.

I suggest that there are four basic conditions required for the development of a Language Awareness programme:

i) a willingness on the part of the teachers to devote time and resources to the study of language in the classroom;

ii) the availability of a coherent policy and guidelines for selecting appropriate contexts and methods for studying language in the primary classroom;

iii) the availability of a policy and guidelines for selecting content, that is, the units and features of language to be studied; and

iv) an awareness and acceptance on the part of teachers of the practical potential of the policies and guidelines outlined above.

I suggest further that the evidence indicates that the first three conditions are already established, that is, that the majority of teachers in primary schools are committed to involving their pupils in a study of language, and that a coherent policy and guidelines for selecting appropriate methods and content has been available since the publication in 1975 of the Report of the Bullock Committee, A LANGUAGE FOR LIFE. The condition which has not been met, the evidence suggests, is a recognition by teachers of the practical potential of the guidelines available.

The evidence on which these observations are based is drawn from two basic sources: first, DES reports and surveys such as the Bullock

Report, the HMI survey, "Primary Education in England" (1978), and the APU survey "Language Performance in Schools" (1981), and secondly, samples of the language books and materials traditionally, and still widely, used in the great majority of primary classrooms.

It is in both Bullock and the Primary Survey that evidence about teacher commitment to language study is documented.

Thus, drawing on the results of questionnaires summarised in Tables 56 and 57 of the Report, the authors conclude not only that there are no grounds for the belief that language study is neglected in primary schools, but that more time is spent on language study in primary schools than in secondary.

The conclusion is based upon data relating only to the formal study of language, i.e. exercises in comprehension, vocabulary, grammar and punctuation, where the primary aim is to focus attention on the way language works, rather than to practise skills or to develop sensitivity and appreciation. Nonetheless it cannot be doubted that the exploration of how language works is not restricted to such contexts. In the primary classroom a study of how language works is an integral part of reading instruction and of the preparation for, and follow-up to writing; time spent on spelling, too, must be counted as a language study activity. When time spent on these activities is included as part of language study time, as shown in Tables 1 and 2 of the Appendix to this paper, it seems reasonable to estimate that a minimum of at least three hours a week is devoted to the study of language in most primary classrooms.

Furthermore it appears that the Reading Practice which is a vehicle for language study for six-year olds (and in which a study of language use and spelling patterns may in fact be obligatory) is increasingly replaced by the more formal study of Language Use and Spelling at the nine-year old level. That this trend continues up to the eleven-year old class is indicated by the Primary Survey. Textbooks containing comprehension, grammar and language exercises intended to provide children with knowledge of "language techniques and writing conventions including spelling and syntax ... featured in the work of almost every nine and eleven year old class ..." Language course kits fulfilling a similar function were used in about half of nine and eleven year old classrooms, along with other kinds of assignment cards

> "... providing exercises in grammar or spelling ..." (5.45 p.51).

Furthermore

> "in nine-tenths of all the classes teachers ensured that children's vocabulary was steadily extended." (5.24 p.46)

With respect to the provision of resources for language study, HMIs observe too, that

> "... in the vast majority of classes reading schemes and courses were used to provide children with material at the right level of difficulty and were used regularly." (5.46 p.51)

Stimuli for language study such as television programmes

> "were introduced in more than four-fifths of classes, and radio in about three-fifths." (5.43 p.50)

> "Libraries and book collections were available almost universally ... In three-quarters of the classes the books had been selected with care and represented a range of reading material containing, for example, interesting plots, good characterisation, clarity of illustration, factual accuracy and an index where appropriate and suited to the age and reading activities of pupils." (5.44 p.51)

In sum, the evidence indicates a widespread willingness and commitment on the part of the teachers to provide time and resources for the study of language, a commitment which is highlighted when provision for language study is compared with that, for instance, for science:

> "Although some science was attempted in a majority of classes, the work was developed seriously in only just over one class in ten ..." (5.69 p.58)

Nonetheless, what the evidence also indicates is that the guidelines which were formulated in Bullock have made little impact on schools. Indeed, the observation of the HMIs undertaking the Primary Survey suggest not only that teachers have not recognised or accepted the practical potential of the guidelines, but also that the implicit model of language study which governs classroom practice is one which is at variance in most important ways with that presented in Bullock. The mismatch between classroom practice and Bullock policy is clearly reflected in HMI observations about the way in which the awareness of language function is developed, the context in which it might be developed, and the range and authenticity of written material to which children are exposed.

With respect to Oral Language, HMIs observe that

> "... in only about three-fifths of these [11-year old] classes were children learning to follow a sustained discussion and contribute appropriately, and in fewer

still were children taught to follow the line of argument." (5.21 p.46)

> "... in only about a fifth of the classes were children encouraged to formulate and pose pertinent questions or helped to find alternative ways of expressing themselves clearly and accurately." (5.24, p.47)

With respect to the written material to which pupils were exposed,

> "it was evident that teachers devoted considerable attention to ensuring that children mastered the basic techniques of reading but there was a tendency at all ages for children to receive insufficient encouragement to extend the range of their reading." (5.27 p.47)

For the abler readers there was little evidence that the more advanced skills were being taught. The work which the ablest readers were given to do was too easy in about two-fifths of the classes, while the teaching of the more advanced reading skills did not occur in three quarters of 11 year old classes.

The range of functions explored in written work was also restricted:

> "It was rare to find children presented with a writing task which involved presenting a coherent argument, exploring alternative possibilities, or drawing conclusions and making judgments." (5.36 p.49)

Furthermore, the potential of children's own writing as a basis for language study was not exploited:

> "Surprisingly in only about a third of classes were samples of children's written work regularly used to monitor their progress. In fewer than half of the classes was children's written work used as a basis for teaching spelling, syntax, sentence structure, or style." (5.38, p.50)

With respect to the deliberate study of language as a system, the widespread reliance of teachers on textbooks gave cause for concern:

> "Reliance on isolated exercises presented in textbooks does not necessarily provide children with the right kind of assistance in improving their capacity to use written language fluently and to some purpose. (5.45, p.51)

HMI disquiet about the use of exercises for the study of language echoes that expressed throughout Bullock (see for instance paragraphs 11.18 - 11.20, 8.14 - 8.15). It serves to highlight further

the gap between Bullock policy and guidelines, and classroom practice. Not only does the 'isolated exercise' persist, but the potential of practical alternatives of the kind recommended in Bullock, such as "group attention to text" (albeit, for Bullock, in the context of a study of literature) does not appear to have been recognized. HMI authors of Bullock Revisited (1982) observe that:

> "... though many teachers read to their classes... group attention to text is rarely observed."

In sum, the evidence suggests that Bullock guidelines about the ways in which awareness of language might be developed have either not been accessible to teachers or have not been accepted by them.

Data from the APU Survey of the Language Performance of primary children indicates too, a gap between Bullock guidelines about content, the features of language which might be the focus of attention, and those which are selected for attention in primary classes (albeit through the hidden curriculum of correction of written work). Thus for most eleven-year olds in the sample, an editing task was interpreted as an invitation to correct spelling while other features such as grammaticality and coherence were ignored. This fact may be interpreted on the one hand as a reflection of the features of language which children have been 'taught' to focus on, or, on the other, as a reflection of the much greater complexity of editing at a level above spelling. HMI authors of Bullock Revisited accept the interpretation of the writers of the report:

> "This finding may be an indication of what eleven-year olds take to be the main requirement of making corrections to a text" (2.2)

Support for this interpretation would seem to come, too, from the evidence given in the Secondary Survey (1979) that

> "weak writing by fifteen year olds was more likely to be found inadequate in terms of content and style than in relation to grammatical or orthographic conventions."

Thus it is with respect to what is taught, as well as to how it it taught, that the differences between Bullock policy and classroom practice are revealed. The formulation in Bullock of a policy and guidelines for the study of language and for the development of language awareness was not, of course the only, nor the primary objective of the Committee. Nonetheless, the guidelines which are presented, not only within the section entitled Language Study, but throughout the Report, are sufficiently comprehensive for them to represent an explicit model for the development of language awareness: a model which may be compared with the implicit model of the primary classroom.

I suggest that a recognition of the distinctions between the two models, and an understanding of their relative accessibility to teachers is a pre-requisite for the acceptance of, and practical realisation of, the Bullock model in the classroom.

The two models may be contrasted with respect to the selection of contexts and of methods for the study of language and the development of awareness, and with respect to the selection of units and features of language to be studied.

The context for the development of language awareness in Bullock is a functional one - the objective is to develop in children an awareness of the function of different varieties of language in use.

> "What is needed is to create the contexts and conditions in which the ability can develop." (5.9, p.54)

Amongst the language uses which are to be explored in the early years of schooling are reporting, collaborating, projecting, perceiving relationships, explaining, expressing and recognising tentativeness, problem-solving, creating imaginative experience, justifying and reflecting. (5.30, p.67)

The development of awareness of function is expected to involve attention to both spoken and written language. As children gain increasing control over the written language they are to be encouraged to become aware, not only of the variety of purposes for which they might read, but also to become aware of the different strategies they can consciously deploy in their reading. Development of this kind of awareness is seen to be progressive throughout the primary, middle and secondary years:

> "The development of reading skills is a progressive one and there are no staging points to which one can attach any particular ages,... We believe that the primary teacher needs an understanding of the reading demands of the later years so that the line of development is clearly recognized." (8.1 p.115)
>
> "It will often be helpful for teachers to encourage their pupils to identify their purposes before they undertake a particular piece of reading." (8.12. p.119)
>
> "We have suggested that pupils should learn how to read for specific purposes, how to organize their material, and how to apply appropriate techniques." (8.19 p.122)

In organizing their own writing, too, pupils are to be encouraged to develop a conscious awareness of their own intentions, and of

potential audiences and when writing for audiences outside the classroom, pupils should be

> "faced with the need to analyse the specific task, to choose the language appropriate to it, and to establish criteria by which to judge what they have achieved." (11.9 p.100)

With respect to the use of written language for learning, a strong case for an explicit awareness on the part of teachers and pupils of the way in which study skills may be developed is presented:

> "... a reader has considerable control over the learning situation and he needs particular skills to take advantage of the possibilities this opens up to him. We can sum these up by saying that reading for learning will be most effective when the reader becomes an active interrogator of the text rather than a passive receiver of words. A second principle is that these skills should be developed in close association with other aspects of language use and in particular with the oral activity recommended in Chapter 10." (8.10, p.118)

For Bullock, as for linguists like Crystal (1976) and Sinclair (1983), a necessary corollary of the study of language function and variety is that the language studied is authentic - the language used in the classroom and playground, in play, and drama, and in the wider world - the spoken language of the children themselves and of the society which meets their interests and needs, and the written language which serves these functions. A central objective is that pupils develop an awareness of the purposes and functions which govern their own language use. Implicit in this view is a recognition of the linguistic competence children bring to schools.

> "Children bring to school a spoken language far more complex than anything they encounter in [these] early readers. They use and can appreciate a wide range of sentence structures. Reading schemes which present highly contrived or artificial sentence structures therefore lack predictability. They prevent children from developing the capacity to detect the sequential probability in linguistic structure." (7.18, p.105)

The need for the written language of the classroom to be authentic is stressed throughout the report. An important feature of authentic texts is that they can serve as a vehicle for a wide range of values and attitudes:

> "We do not suggest that reading schemes should be

passed through a kind of ideological or ethical scanner. But we do believe that children's experience should not be confined to a narrow range of attitudes." (7.17, p.105)

Not only is it important for children to be exposed to authentic language, they should also be given the opportunity to produce it:

"If, as Chomsky argues, the normal use of language is innovative, it becomes a vital principle that the teacher should create opportunities most likely to produce innovation and generate natural language." (10.36, p.159)

One means of developing awareness of a variety of natural language forms is through drama:

"An increasing number of teachers of drama, ... do in fact see their work as productive of such [natural] language. They would add that it helps to establish confidence in social intercourse, as well as familiarity with a variety of speech forms. ... Drama thus has the capacity for sensitizing the ear for appropriate registers and responses. It encourages linguistic adaptability, often accustoming children to unfamiliar modes of language." (10.36, p.159)

The functions of language to which pupils are expected to become sensitised range from the basically instrumental, to the persuasive and heuristic functions of language in small group discussion, to the imaginative, evaluative and discerning functions, which are evoked in response to literature. The opportunity for pupils to work in small groups and to discuss what they are doing is seen to be fundamental to learning.

"Most nursery and infant teachers recognize that when young children are involved in some activity the talk that accompanies it becomes an important instrument for learning." (5.22, p.62)

"Reading is an instrument for individual learning but it is also a collective activity, and we believe that group discussion based on co-operative reading is a valuable means of learning." (8.10, p.118)

In Bullock one of the most effective ways of encouraging discussion is seen to be through group attention to text:

"In recommending an expansion of supported individual reading in schools we see it as a complementary process to group attention to a text. Some of the best and most

lasting effects of English teaching have come about through the simultaneous encounter of teacher, pupil and text," (9.21, p.134).

Even in the early years:

> "A good deal of incentive can be provided by well organized small group work where the interaction draws upon shared experiences in reading. The children can be encouraged to discuss what they are reading, to ask questions and offer answers, and to compare their ideas of what the book said." (7.31, p.112-113)

The ultimate objective is the development of conscious discernment:

> "Most teachers of English would include among their most important aims growth of discernment in their pupils." (9.12, p.130)

The means by which discernment is to be developed is through the extension of voluntary reading for pleasure;

> "As we see it the main emphasis should be on extending the range of a pupil's reading. True discernment can come only from a breadth of experience. Learning how to appreciate with enthusiasm is more important than learning how to reject." (9.15, p.132)

The role of enjoyment in developing extensive reading and discernment is seen to be critical.

> "We can sum up by saying that whatever else a pupil takes away from his experience of literature in school he should have learned to see it as a source of pleasure." (9.28, p.137)

The written language to which pupils are introduced is not only to be authentic but also representative of the extensive range of varieties: from those deployed in pupils' own written work, to the language of textbooks, the media and literature.

> "There has not been enough thought given to the different varieties of English and to the stages of language development at which children can begin to cope with them." (11.6, p.164)

Pupils

> "should be given the opportunity to explore many different kinds of media and learn how to obtain what they need." (6.43, p.95)

Awareness of language varieties is seen to be developed through writing as well as reading. Differentiation of function in writing should be developed throughout the school years:

> "We believe that progress in writing throughout the school years should be marked by an increasing differentiation in the kinds of writing a pupil can successfully tackle. ... Their reading interests will be an influential factor, particularly in the early stages. To develop they must take in written forms of the language and articulate these with their own general language resources built up by years of listening and speaking." (11.8, p.166)

Awareness of language varieties is seen to be developed through the reading of texts in the subject areas and literature:

> "Subject teachers need to be aware of the processes involved, able to provide the variety of reading material that is appropriate, and willing to see it as their responsibility to help their pupils meet the reading demands of their subject. The variety of written forms a child meets in his reading will be an influence upon the development of his writing abilities. To restrict the first can result in limiting the second." (12.7, p.191)

Literature is seen to offer pupils experience of an even wider range of forms:

> "Literature brings the child into an encounter with language in its most complex and varied forms. Through these complexities are presented the thoughts, experiences and feelings of people who exist outside and beyond the reader's daily awareness. This process of bringing them within that circle of consciousness is where the greatest value of literature lies." (9.2. p.125)

The aim is not to prescribe invariant rules about language and language use, but to develop sensitivity to language and to initiate a search for pattern, the outcome of which might be the formulation of tentative rules or hypotheses which we all make use of in speaking, listening, writing and reading.

A related objective is to illustrate the dependence of such patterns and rules on social and linguistic context:

> "We have already placed special emphasis on the importance of pupil's intentions as a writer and have

suggested that this will arise out of the context of work in the class or the broader one of his out of school-life, as shared with his teacher and class-mates. It is upon these contexts that the teacher works with a view to rousing specific individual intentions,...." (11.7 p.165)

The role of experimentation in the development of language is also seen to be crucial:

"If a pupil is progressively to develop in his handling of the language he needs opportunity to experiment with new forms and to do so with security. (11.10 p.167)

The study of language in context is contrasted with a prescriptive, exercise-based approach. With reference to reading workshops and laboratories it is observed that

"any real gain in reading development must come through the generation of a strong motivation and this means reading to satisfy a purpose. This is more likely to arise from the wide-ranging opportunities of the curriculum than from the arbitrary stimulus of 'laboratory' materials. (8.8 p.117)

The disadvantages of a prescriptive approach to language are seen to relate both to content and to modes of learning:

(11.18).. "We do not conclude [from this] that a child should not be taught how to improve his use of language; quite the contrary....what is questionable is the practice of setting exercises for the whole class .. what is also open to question is the nature of some of these exercises... Most give the child no useful insight into language and many.. mislead" (11.19 p.171)

In sum:

"Explicit instruction out of context, is in our view of little value" (11.21 p.172)

With respect to linguistic context, the necessity for pupils to be able to utilize context and anticipation, is stressed as is the role of hypothesis testing:

"Our analysis of the problem has led us to the view that it is better for children to learn phoneme-grapheme relations in the context of whole-word recognition, at least in the early stages of schooling

> ... children will be developing their own hypotheses about phoneme-grapheme correspondences and this process should certainly be encouraged as opportunities arise." (6.26 p.89)

The integral relationship between use of context and prediction of language patterns is recognised:

> "All the points already made about letter sequence and probability apply equally to phoneme sequences. Thus a listener not only has to recognize phonemes as they are uttered but to anticipate very efficiently those that are likely to follow... what we emphasise here is the fundamental importance of prediction in attacking unfamiliar words (6.31 p.90/91)

Anticipation and prediction of likely sequences in context is seen to operate at every level from phonemic to syntactic sequences:

> "Word recognition is also made easier by the ability to anticipate syntactic sequences. This means that for the young child certain kinds of reading material, must present a problem" (6.34 p.92)

This role of context and prediction is seen to be equally important at the level of meaning.

> "The anticipation of sequences is also called into play at the level of meaning... The ambiguity of letters considered in isolation is almost trivial when compared to the ambiguity of isolated words. Only by using the surrounding sequences can the reader identify which of the many possible meanings an author intends in a given passage. The most effective teaching of reading, therefore, is that which gives the pupil the various skills he needs to make fullest possible use of context cues in searching for meaning." (6.35 p.92)

Indeed the notion of context is central to the Bullock model. It determines not only the situation in which language is studied, but also what is studied.
The situation in which it is studied is one of enquiry, involving teacher and pupils collaborating in an exploration, in the analysis of data and in hypothesis formulation and testing. Awareness and control of language is seen to be developed through involving pupils in a wide range of situations and in conscious analysis of language in these situations:

> We have advocated throughout this section that children should progressively gain control of

language by using it in response to a variety of demands. They can be helped to do this by studying how it works in various situations, not in any sense of choosing models or opting between stereotypes but by insight into its richness and infinite possibilities." (11.29 p.176)

"What we are suggesting then, is that children should learn about language by experiencing it and experimenting with its use." (11.25 p.173)

Furthermore the units or features of language which receive attention are of all sizes - from the macro-units of the complete story or exchange, or report, at one level, to sentences, phrases and collocations of words at another, to the micro units at the level of the word and its constituents. Increasingly pupils are expected to be able to perceive 'themes' and structures as they read, and to determine

"... what is essential supporting detail and what is peripheral." (8.15 p.120)

Close study of text is seen to further these objectives:

"Even when skimming at speed [the reader] must be able to pick out certain features and identify general structures and relationships. It may help pupils to acquire this ability if on occasion they make a close analysis of a passage to identify the significant words in sentences, and significant sentences in paragraphs, working out in group discussion the relationship between position and function. ... By recognizing the function of various sentences in the structure of the paragraph the pupils are helped to a grasp of the theme." (8.15 p.121)

Attention to lower-level features of language such as morphology, parts of speech, punctuation and collocation is also seen to be necessary:

"Though in every instance the need should create the opportunity, the teacher ought to ensure that in a given period of time the pupils cover certain features of language and for this purpose might find a check-list useful. We believe these features should certainly include punctuation, some aspects of usage, the way words are built and the company they keep, and a knowledge of the modest collection of technical terms useful for discussion of language." (11.21 p.172)

..."it is perfectly reasonable that by the end of the middle years children should know about the parts of speech, but they should encounter them in the course of looking at language in a living context." (11.23 p.173)

Nonetheless it is up to the teacher to construct a syllabus

".. it is reasonable to set clear targets which children recognize to be achievable. With this in view the teacher should determine appropriate language objectives, devise his own ways of fulfilling them, and assess the extent to which they have been achieved." (11.22 p.173)

In sum, it is only with respect to possible syllabuses that the Bullock guidelines are less than comprehensive.

In other respects the Bullock model is both comprehensive and explicit. It involves a functional context, exposure to authentic language varieties, a conscious and deliberate search for pattern at all levels of the system and the opportunity for pupils to generate and test hypotheses and to discuss language phenomena. By contrast the evidence examined earlier suggests that the language study (as opposed to use) undertaken in most primary classrooms, is not undertaken in a functional context, nor is it concerned except incidentally with language variety and the authentic use of language. The model on which it is based is one which not only involves a reliance on textbooks but itself owes a substantial debt to the implicit model of the traditional question-and-answer exercise of the text book. It is this exercise-bound model of language study which may be contrasted with the Bullock model.

When we examine the traditional language study of the primary classroom we can see that it is the textbook exercise itself which determines the extent to which function and variety may be explored. The provision in textbooks of exercises, by definition, de-limits both the context and function of the language being studied. The exemplars of language used in exercises, whether they are texts, sentences, or smaller units, have been pre-selected out of context. Thus while they might incidentally represent different (written) varieties of language, their connection with the real world of the classroom, the ongoing curriculum, and society is inevitably remote.

Furthermore, because the exemplars are used as the basis for written exercises, their original function must necessarily be obscured. It is difficult to explore the function and variety of a unit of language, a story, a description, a report, without a consideration of its real life and linguistic context, its function in that context, and the patterns and forms which distinguish it from

another instance of language. Such an exploration demands richer resources than can be made available in a textbook; it requires an awareness and an acceptance on the part of the teacher and pupils of the objective of the study; it requires tentativeness, time and the opportunity for discussion. In short, it requires active problem-solving on the part of pupils, and interaction between pupil and pupil, and pupil and teacher. As I have argued elsewhere (Davies, 1983b), the textbook has advantages over the teacher as a source of information; as an initiator and monitor of active learning, however, it is severely constrained. Thus even when the objective of an exercise is a consideration of function, the obligatory means of doing this through the setting of simple questions like:

"The writer wrote this story to:

a) give information
b) give an opinion
c) amuse the reader"

restricts such a consideration to a superficial level.

The particular linguistic form of the question and answer, or multiple-choice exchange which constitutes an exercise determines a prescriptive view of language, and the selection for study of only those units and features of language which can be handled in a prescriptive way. Thus it is that the language study promoted by the exercise presents a model of language in which spelling patterns, morphological and inflection rules, simple definitions of word meanings and parts of speech predominate. That such features of language are worthy of study for certain purposes and in certain contexts is not at issue; what is in question is the validity of the model as a representation of the language system. It is what is excluded which gives cause for concern.

What cannot be handled by the model is a study of the patterns and forms which distinguish one variety of text from another; and one exchange from another, there is no place in the traditional exercise for the study of the collocations of words and phrases which characterise a distinct unit of language, or of the cohesion of lines and signals which link one part of a text with another, and which open and close exchanges, or of the structures which underly distinct registers and genre.

Furthermore the exercise which requires of pupils only a written answer to a simple question, prevents them from utilizing their own resources and competencies for the study of language. There is no space here for pupils to formulate tentative hypotheses and test them, to draw upon and make explicit their own intuitive knowledge of language, to discuss language phenomena, or to collaborate in pushing their understanding forward.

In sum, a study of language which is promoted through the exercise,

based as it is on a deficit model of language and of learning, is inherently designed in practice to restrict and distort awareness of language rather than develop it.

The question is, what is it about the exercise-based model which accounts for its apparent appeal to teachers in comparison with the Bullock model, and what is to be learned from asking this question?

It would be tempting to suggest that a programme of exercises makes life easy for the teacher; it obviates the need to collect resources and to prepare lessons, it keeps pupils busy. Such an explanation, I suggest, is too facile and does a disservice to the commitment, creativity and rationality of primary teachers. It also fails to recognise the actual demands made on teachers by pupils working on exercises. Classroom observations show that exercises which are designed in principle to elicit simple right and wrong answers, in practice, are frequently ambiguous - trying to help pupils interpret questions is for most teachers a full-time task, and one which is harder to manage successfully than almost any other.

I propose that there are other features of the exercise-based model which suggest an explanation of why it might recommend itself to teachers. Specifically, the programme or textbook offers teachers exemplifications of a model in the form of pupil activities, it offers a syllabus, and it is accessible.

The exercise, by definition, is a concrete exemplification of the implicit model of the text book or programme - it is a realisation of the model in the form of activities which can be undertaken in the classroom. A comparable realisation of a programme derived from Bullock has not to date been available to teachers, nor, as I have tried to show elsewhere, is the textbook format ideal for the realization of such a policy. In this respect is it worth observing that the published programme which comes closest to representing Bullock policy, 'Web of Language', not only provides activities which are alternatives to the exercise, but is also dependent for its successful use on the extra resources such as tapes which support it.

It seems then, that for teachers, a policy is neither recognisable nor acceptable unless it is represented through exemplars of pupil activities of one form or another. Where the only exemplars available are traditional exercises, it can be predicted that these will be preferred, by all but a few highly experienced teachers, to general guidelines.

Closely linked to the need for concrete exemplification of a model, too, is the need for a selection of the content which is to be studied. Again it is the text book or programme, rather than a policy, which makes this selection, and in effect provides a

syllabus. For the teacher without specialist training in language to draw upon, the provision of such a selection by an authority must be welcome. So too, must be the apparent authority and reliability of the linguistic rules which are exemplified in the exercises. For teachers who are sharply aware of the limitations of their own knowledge of language, the textbook in effect functions as an apparently reliable source of reference about the language system, and about what pupils need to learn about the system. What is more, in practice, it is the only reference accessible to most teachers. It is the reference and implicit guide, which, as the Primary Survey showed, is actually to be found in the classroom; alternative sources of reference, whether drawn from in-service courses or from school-based initiatives, are rarely available in schools and hence are much less accessible to teachers. It is striking too, that even the standard sources of reference, which underpin the teaching of English as a Foreign Language, are virtually unknown in schools.

In sum, if the Bullock report provides rational and explicit guidelines for the study of language, what the textbook or programme does is to provide implicit guidelines, and more critically, actual exemplification of what children might do with language, and of what a syllabus might be.

It is, I suggest, these features of the exercised-based programme, especially the actual exemplification of what pupils might do, that accounts for the continued reliance of teachers on the textbook; a reliance which has inevitably been established in the absence of alternatives. In the classroom, the most rigorous test of linguistic theory and methodology is what it tells us about what children might do. If teachers are to become aware of and to accept guidelines for the development of language awareness, then it seems that a further requirement must be provision of exemplars of children doing things with language and the provision of sources of reference, which can be used to describe and explain these things.

The question is, what sources other than the textbook might provide exemplars, with supportive references, of what children can do with language? The answer, I propose, is sources which historically have been utilised only to provide occasional insights into aspects of language development, rather than for the construction of an integrated picture of the way in which language awareness might be developed. The sources I have in mind are established research investigations which provide evidence of children's naturally developing awareness of language and classroom-based observations and studies which provide exemplars of the way in which this natural awareness can be further extended in the classroom. That there is a wealth of such sources could be demonstrated through an exhaustive listing; more useful at this stage, I believe, will be the provision of illustrations of the kind of sources envisaged.

Illustrative, for instance, of research studies which provide

exemplars of the development of awareness of language at the macro-level, as manifest in spontaneous speech is Halliday's analysis of dialogue showing the gradual acquisition of these basic functions: Instrumental, Regulatory, Interactional, Personal, Heuristic, Imaginative and Informative, in: Halliday M.A.K. 'Learning How to Mean: Explorations in the Development of Language', Edward Arnold, 1975.

Illustrative of children's sensitivity to function in writing in the classroom are exemplars collected by the author while supervising students in primary classrooms in Cambridgeshire, and while working in South Yorkshire classrooms.

A source which provides a discussion of the educational implications of such material is provided in:

HALLIDAY, M.A.K. 'Relevant models of language' in Wilkinson, A. (ed) The State of Language. Vol. 22, No. 1 November 1969 issue of Educational Review.

Likewise documentation of children's awareness and use of the Interactive, Heuristic and Informative functions in small group discussion is provided by:

BARNES, D and F Todd (1977.) Communication and Learning in Small Groups, Routledge and Kegan Paul and by ROSEN, C and H Rosen (1973) The Language of Primary School Children, Penguin

While an analysis of children's use of hypothesis testing strategies is available in:

DAVIES, F and T Green 'Directed Activities Related to Text: Test Analysis and Text Reconstruction' in ERIC Clearinghouse on Communication Skills and Reading Abstract in Resources in Education, March 1982

Evidence of children's knowledge of story structure is equally well documented in:

MANDLER, J M and N S Johnson 'Remembrance of things parsed: story structure and recall', in:Cognitive psychology Vol. 9, 1977 p. 111-151

and in:

APPLEBEE, A N (1978) The Child's Concept of Story: Ages two to seventeen, University of Chicago Press

while the role of story structure in young children's reading is illustrated by:

STEBBING, J and B Raban (1982) 'Reading for Meaning: an investigation of the effect of narrative in two reading books for seven year olds', Reading 16.3, pp.153-162.

Evidence that pupils can also learn to utilize text structures other than story-structure and a description of the classroom activities which can be used for this purpose are provided by:

DAVIES, F and T Green Reading for Learning in the Sciences, Oliver and Boyd (1983) and by LUNZER, E A and K Gardner Learning from the Written Word, Oliver and Boyd, 1983.

Equally informative of children's awareness of language at the micro-level are research studies of children's sensitivity to parts of speech in reading such as those by:

CLAY, M M 'A syntactic analysis of reading errors', Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour, vol 7 1968 pp 434-438 and WEBER, J M 'First-graders use of grammatical context in reading' in LEVIN, H and J P Williams (eds) Basic Studies in Reading, Basic Books Inc., 1970.

Evidence that this sensitivity is found in the daily intercourse of the classroom can, of course, be provided by the many thousands of teachers who have undertaken miscue analysis.

More critical perhaps for teachers is the availability of a comprehensive set of classroom activities designed to develop awareness of language at all levels of the system. This too is available in the materials produced by Helen Arnold and colleagues in Suffolk, namely Suffolk County Council Education Committee: Language Guidelines, and in materials currently being developed and exemplars being collected by Anne Darnton at Bromford Junior School, Birmingham.

It is the use of exemplars drawn from sources like those above, which would, I suggest, meet a number of critical conditions:

they would serve to focus attention on the linguistic and heuristic resources which children bring to the classroom, and on what children are trying to do with language, instead of on performance limitations which are determined by artificial tasks;

as such, the exemplars would provide a solid foundation for a range of different but practical syllabuses;

because they would demonstrate what children can do, they would be accessible to teachers and would hence provide models for the development of classroom activities;

they would also provide direction for the use by teachers of standard references on language and learning and would serve, too, to initiate further classroom observation and data collection.